

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AF-08 /070 W
-----061551Z 049196 /40

R 061427Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4137
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

CONFIDENTIAL TRIPOLI 0300

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LY, CU
SUBJ: CASTRO VISIT

1. THE GENERAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS RECENTLY CONCLUDED IN SEBHA WILL CERTAINLY BE REMEMBERED AS MUCH FOR THE DRAMATIC APPEARANCE OF FIDEL CASTRO ON THE PLATFORM AS FOR WHATEVER IT PRODUCED CONSTITUTIONALLY FOR LIBYA. CASTRO, ACCCOMPANIED BY QADHAFI AND THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE FROM THE AUDIENCE, MOUNTED THE PLATFORM IN THE EVENING OF MARCH 2 SHORTLY AFTER HE ARRIVED IN SEBHA.

2. IN A RARE DEPARTURE QADHAFI SPOKE HIS WORDS OF WELCOME FROM A PREPARED TEXT. HE PAID FULL TRIBUTE TO CASTRO THE REVOLUTIONARY, CASTRO THE LEADER OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND CASTRO THE MAN WHO HAD ABORTED THE EVIL DESIGNS OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND EXPLOITATION IN LATIN AMERICA.

3. FOLLOWING A LARGE "ABROASSO," CASTRO RESPONDED WITH A FAIRLY MODERATE AND MERCIFULLY BRIEF SPEECH. HE GAVE HIS BLESSING TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AND TO QADHAFI'S ROLE AS AN ANTI-
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IMPERIALIST IN AFRICA. CASTRO ACKNOWLEDGED SOMEWHAT MODESTLY THAT HE HAD INDEED WITHSTOOD THE PRESSURES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST IMPERIALISTIC POWER. AT NO POINT, HOWEVER, DID HE MENTION THE US BY NAME AND, EXCEPT FOR THE ABOVE REFERENCE, DEVOTED HIMSELF TO PRAISE OF QADHAFI AND THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION AND PLEDGED FULL SUPPORT OF THE CUBAN PEOPLE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT

OF LIBYA'S PROGRESSIVE EFFORTS. CASTRO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE AND QADHAFI OPERATED FROM AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS, BUT THEY WERE BOUND IN FRATERNAL FRIENDSHIP BY THEIR COMMON OPPOSITION TO IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM AND DEDICATION TO THE FORCES OF PROGRESS.

4. CASTRO APPEARED IN GOOD FORM IF SOMEWHAT TIRED. HIS ORATORICAL STYLE WAS SOMEWHAT INHIBITED BY THE NECESSITY FOR FREQUENT PAUSES FOR TRANSLATION. CASTRO APPEARED SLIGHTLY RESTLESS, OCCASIONALLY PUZZLED AND SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED DURING THE CHAOTIC PROCEEDINGS LEADING UP TO THE NAMING OF THE NEW CABINET OVER MANY OBJECTIONS FROM THE DELEGATIONS THERE PRESENT.

5. THE PURPOSE OF CASTRO'S TRIP REMAINS OPEN FOR SPECULATION. THE CONSENSUS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, NONE OF WHOM CLAIMED PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRIP, IS THAT COMMON INTEREST IN AFRICA WILL FEATURE LARGELY IN THIS TEN-DAY VISIT. ACCORDING TO MEDIA SUPPORT, SUBSTANTIVE TALKS BETWEEN THE LEADERS AND THEIR DELEGATIONS WERE HELD IN SEBHA AFTER THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. PRESS REPORTS ADD THAT THE CUBAN LEADER VISITED THE KUFRA PROJECT (SOUTHEASTERN LIBYA) MARCH 4 AND ARRIVED IN BENGHAZI MARCH 5.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TRIPOL00300
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770077-0502
Format: TEL
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770388/aaaaczip.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d8ab12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3192083
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASTRO VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, CU, LY, (CASTRO RUZ, FIDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d8ab12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009